

Memory, Perspective, and the End of Self: An Extension of the Cognitive Compression Framework

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Abstract

This paper explores the structural divergence between memory and perspective within the entangled cognition model presented in The Relative Framework. While often treated as functionally similar, both being reconstructions of temporal information, we reveal their foundational equivalence yet purposive opposition: one seeks narrative closure, the other predictive leverage. Emotional salience is shown to be the primary filter in memory compression, biasing recall toward identity coherence rather than truth. We then turn to the concept of death, not as an experiential end-state, but as the final collapse of structural continuity, entropic unraveling of reactive feedback, and the ultimate invalidation of perceived agency. In this, we position death as the chaos theory of the mind, where causally determined variation meets non-narrative termination.

1.The Shared Scaffold: Memory and Perspective

Within the cognitive compression framework, both memory and perspective are structurally identical in architecture: reconstructive, partial, and filtered through reactive environmental data. Yet their purposes reveal a bifurcation.

Perspective is anticipatory. It composes the present by projecting forward, recursively mapping potential futures within a perceived control environment.

Memory is reflective. It compresses the past for storage, optimized not for fidelity but for functional narrative stability.

Both serve the narrative illusion of selfhood, but from opposing temporal vectors.

2.Emotional Salience as Compression Heuristic

The mechanism of memory selection is not objective retrieval, but emotional filtration.

Events are not remembered because they occurred; they are remembered because they were felt, and in feeling, anchored to the narrative identity. This yields a form of selective distortion where emotion assigns compression priority.

Thus, memory becomes less a factual archive and more a reactive artifact, curated for identity stability, not historical accuracy. This places memory under the same entangled distortion as perspective, but with an additional layer of retrospective rationalization.

3.Memory as Efficiency, Perspective as Navigation

To function in a deterministic yet perceptually uncertain environment, the cognitive system must limit data retention. This is not loss; it is structural necessity.

Memory cherry-picks to reduce cognitive load and preserve a workable fiction of continuity.

Perspective projects using that fiction to orient the self within possible future states.

These two systems co-reinforce. Faulty memory compresses the past to stabilize identity, and perspective uses that false stability to simulate coherent choice.

4.Death as the Chaos Theory of the Mind

Where perspective predicts and memory distorts, death halts. It is not experienced; it is the absence of all structural reconstitution. In this way, death is the entropic endpoint of the system: the undoing of compression, the cessation of recursion, the flattening of feedback.

Just as chaos theory reveals how minute variances in initial conditions lead to unpredictable outcomes in complex systems, so too does death reveal the non-linear terminal behavior of each human narrative.

There is no true symmetry between lives. Though deterministic, their emergent experiences diverge radically due to structural compression, emotional filtering, and reactive feedback. Death finalizes these variations not as conclusion, but as the collapse of the recursive loop.

In rare cases, the mind exhibits what is known as the near-death experience, a perceptual surge at the edge of collapse. Structurally, this is not evidence of continuity beyond death, but rather the final convulsion of the reactive system, compressing unresolved narrative into a last recursive burst. Light, tunnels, life reviews, and feelings of peace are not portals to elsewhere, but internal simulations attempting to stabilize identity as the feedback loop begins to fail.

This final reactive sequence serves as an emergency protocol, not to preserve life, but to preserve coherence. The near-death experience can thus be understood not as a preview of the afterlife, but as the ultimate compression artifact, an accelerated summary of identity designed to ease the structural collapse of selfhood.

Furthermore, the content of near-death experiences is often shaped by emotionally encoded cultural narratives. What is recalled or perceived in these final moments reflects not an external reality, but internalized expectations—religious imagery, metaphysical motifs, and learned symbols of closure. The dying mind simulates from what it has known, assembling familiar fragments into its last reactive mirage. The more deeply embedded these symbols are, the more likely they are to emerge in the mind's final recursive loop.

5.The Final Illusion of Closure

Death is often narrated by the living as peace, liberation, or end. But from within the framework, such notions are projection errors, attempts to assign narrative structure to a state fundamentally outside structure.

There is no narrative in death. There is no meaning, no message, no closure. Only silence, the cessation of the narrative self and the collapse of predictive recursion.

In this, death is not a moment but a threshold, beyond which structural compression no longer applies and the illusion of agency disintegrates entirely.

Closing Remarks

This paper extends The Relative Framework by drawing clear structural distinctions between memory and perspective while highlighting their unified architecture under emotional compression. It also introduces death, not metaphysically, but structurally, as a final entropic condition of cognition: a chaos state wherein all predictive models and narrative constructions dissolve.

As with all entries in the framework, this paper does not claim truth, but structure. The coherence it presents is not absolute, but internally consistent, serving only to extend the reactive map of emergent experience.

Meaning arises from the life we live, grounded in our present experience. Regardless of beliefs about what may follow, our morals and actions shape the reality we navigate now. This framework focuses on the value and responsibility inherent in life itself, without dismissing the personal significance others may find in faith or the afterlife.